

Peter IVANIČ, Martina
LUKÁČOVÁ
Constantine the
Philosopher University
in Nitra

УДК 930.85 (=16) “860/881“

JOURNEYS OF ST. METHODIUS WITHIN THE YEARS 860 - 881¹

St. Methodius, born in Thessaloniki, was not only one of the leading Christian missionaries and diplomats of the 9th century, but also an active traveller. In this article we focus mainly on this aspect of his life. St. Methodius in the service of Byzantine imperial court and Moravian rulers made several rather long journeys the reference of which can be found in sources from this period. We trace back his possible routes and time period in which he could make those journeys. At the beginning of his missionary and diplomatic career he travelled together with his brother Constantine, who died in 869.

Mission to the Khazars

The first common and undisputed diplomatic experience for Methodius and his younger brother Constantine in the service of Byzantium was the message for the Khazars. His most important task was probably to form an alliance or to renew the alliance between the Byzantine emperor and the Khazar Khaganate. In summer 860 the Russians attacked Constantinople and unexpectedly jeopardised Byzantium², and therefore the imperial court decided to find allies against them. Since the Russians were in the neighbourhood of the Khazars considering previous good diplomatic relations, Byzantines referred to them. At the end of the year 860 the imperial mission, part of which were Constantine and Methodius, set out for

¹ This article was written within the project KEGA no. 014UKF-4/2012.

² В. Е. Науменко, “Византийско-хазарские отношения в середине IX века,” *Khazars / Хазар. Jews and Slavs* 16. (2005): 238.

its way. The author of *The Life of Constantine* states that they first headed to an important Byzantine city Chersones (near to today's Sevastople) in Crimea. Although specific means of transport is not mentioned there, it is assumed that they sailed on a ship³, because travelling on land would last longer and would be more dangerous. In case of bad weather the fastest way to travel in those days was to sail on the sea. At that time, the Black sea was cruised mainly by merchant ships and transport ships. Byzantine fleet comprised of various types of ships. Written sources state the names of ships as galeai, monereis, chelandia, karabia and the most popular ship of that time dromon.⁴ Very important evidence about the journey to Chersones and further to the Khazars presents the message about the transport of Byzantine builders and soldiers under the guidance of Petron Kamater with the task to build the fortress Sarkel on the river Tanais (today's Don) for the Khazars. They sailed on chelandias (χελάνδια). After arriving to Chersones they changed other ships and continued along the river Don to the place of destination.⁵ Considering the danger of an attack and the importance of the mission the members of which were the brothers of Salonica, it is possible to assume that they sailed in a military ship which could provide them protection against the enemies' attacks. In those days the core of the Byzantine fleet was comprised of ships known as dromon. It was a fast military rowing boat with a sail which too was used for transport of important envoys. There is a message from the pope Nicholas I of 860, where he asked the Byzantine Emperor Michael III to send its ambassadors to Rome by dromons, which attests to this fact as well.⁶ Byzantine envoys heading from Constantinople to Chersones in the same year might have used this ship for transport too. It is highly probable that they travelled along the west coast of the Black Sea. In this time the most frequently used

³ "Žitije Konstantina VIII.," in *Magnae Moraviae fontes historici II : Textus biographici, hagiographici, liturgici*, ed. Dagmar Bartoňková and Radoslav Večerka (Praha : KLP, 2010), 59. There is only a short reference in the Life of Methodius about the mission to the Khazars without specific information about the destination and aim of the journey. Žitije Mefodija, archiepiskopa Moravьska IV.," in *Magnae Moraviae fontes historici II : Textus biographici, hagiographici, liturgici*, ed. Dagmar Bartoňková and Radoslav Večerka (Praha : KLP, 2010), 122.

⁴ For terminology see John H. Pryor and Elizabeth M. Jeffreys, *The Age of the Dromon. The Byzantine Navy 500 – 1204* (Leiden; Boston : Brill Academic Publishers, 2006), 188.

⁵ Constantine Porphyrogenitus, "De administrando imperio 42.," in *Constantine Porphyrogenitus – De administrando imperio* ed. Gyula Moravcsik and Romilly J. H. Jenkins (Washington, District of Columbia: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1967), 182-184. The fortress Sarkel was built by Byzantine builders during the reign of the Emperor Theophilos (829 – 842) upon Khazars' request sometime between 833 and 838 at the estuary of the river Don to the Sea of Azov.

⁶ Pryor and Jeffreys, *The Age of the Dromon*, 166.

cruise to Chersones was through the harbour Debeltos (near today's Burgas), Sozopolis (today's Sozopol), Anchialos (today's Pomorie), Mesembria (today's Nesebar), Odessos (today's Varna), Tomis (today's Constanta) to the Danube delta and then along the mouth of rivers Dniester and Dnieper to Crimea.⁷ Due to upcoming winter they interrupted the journey in this important Byzantine harbour. Neither exact duration of the cruise nor duration of their stay in Crimea is stated in the available sources. Vladimír Vavřínek assumes that they could stay there from December until March.⁸ Constantine did not rest there. Apart from other things, on 30 January 861 he succeeded to find mortal remains of the third Roman bishop Clement (? – 97/101?, 4th Roman pope from 88/92).⁹ In spring, when the conditions for sailing improved, the envoys could set out for another phase of their journey. *The Life of Constantine* contains a message that Constantine got on board of the sailing ship and set out for the journey to the Khazars through the Lake Maeotis and went through Caspian Gate to the Caucasian Mountains. Then, he was supposed to meet the Khazar envoy whose role was to accompany the mission to the Khaganate.¹⁰ Lake Maeotis is an ancient name for today's Sea of Azov. There is no unified statement for interpretation of the location of the Caspian Gate of the Caucasian Mountains. Some researchers assume it is the strait at today's Derbent¹¹, since in this town on the west coast of the Caspian Sea the Khazar Khaganate used to spend winter time.¹² However, the majority of historians believe it is the Kerch strait which was in ancient times called Crimean Bosphorus. An important Greek settlement Pantikapaion used to be there in ancient times.¹³ According to František Dvorník, the Byzantine envoys should meet the Khazar envoy in the Sarkel fortress on the river Don.¹⁴ The mission shall subsequently proceed on land to the seat of the Khazar Khaganate the name of which is not mentioned in the written sources. This led to the origin of several hypotheses. Since Khazar rulers had several seats, the majority of historians believe that the mission met the Khagan in

⁷ Ch. Ioannis Dimitroukas, *Reisen und Verkehr im Byzantinischen Reich vom Anfang des 6. bis zur Mitte des 11. Jh.* Band II. (Athens : Publ. Basilopoulos, 1997), 433.

⁸ Vladimír Vavřínek, *Cyrl a Metoděj mezi Konstantinopolí a Římem* (Praha : Vyšehrad, 2013), 69.

⁹ Vavřínek, *Cyrl a Metoděj*, 71.

¹⁰ "Žitíje Konstantina VIII.," 61.

¹¹ František Dvorník, *Byzantské misie u Slovanů* (Praha : Vyšehrad, 1970), 85.

¹² Anthony-Emil N. Tachios, *Cirillo e Metodjo. Le radici cristiane della cultura slava* (Milano : Jaca Book, 2005), 64.

¹³ Zdeněk Měřinský, *České země od příchodu Slovanů po Velkou Moravu II.* (Praha : Libri, 2006), 536.

¹⁴ Dvorník, *Byzantské misie u Slovanů*, 85.

the town Semender (Samandar), which was the former capital of the Khazar Empire and at the time of arrival of Constantine and Methodius the Khagan could use it as its summer seat.¹⁵ Another group of experts believe that they could meet in the capital of the empire called Ityl (Itil, Atyl, Atel) which was located in the delta of the river Volga.¹⁶ Zdeněk Měřinský states another possibility which is the well-known fortress Sarkel on the river Don. It is today identified with the locality of Cimplansk on the Lower Don.¹⁷ On the way back they went through a deserted country with lack of water. Nevertheless, they were able to get to Chersones without injuries.¹⁸ At the end of the year 861 the brothers were back in the capital of the Byzantine Empire.¹⁹ In terms of aims of the mission to the Khazars to be fulfilled it is necessary to stress mainly the important theological and spiritual aspect, which is most often mentioned together with the improvement of Constantine's language skills. Nevertheless, there is also a speculation that the aim of the mission was to try to improve the position of Christians which lived in the Khazar Khaganate.²⁰

In Otto's historical atlas of Slovakia the route of the mission to Khazars from Constantinople through the Black Sea towards the Kerch strait and through the Sea of Azov along the river Don to Sarkel is depicted very schematically.²¹

Taking into consideration that the assumption about the target of the Byzantine mission to Semender is correct, we face another problem with regarding exact localization of this Khazar town. Arabian sources state that it was located 4 days of travel from today's Derbent and 7 to 8 days from Ityl. Arabian geographer Al-Muqaddasī (around 945/946 – 991) states that the town was located at the sea between the river al-Chazar (today's Volga) and the town Bab (today's Derbent). Semender was identified with Tarku or Anzhi-Qala near Makhachkala by Russian experts and according to nomadic nations expert Lev Nikolajevič Gumilev it was identified with the

¹⁵ Dvorník, *Byzantské misie u Slovanů*, 85. Jozef Kúttnik Šmálov, *Prvý učiteľ slovienskeho národa. Život Konštantína Filozofa, rehol'ným menom Cyril* (Bratislava : Lúč, 1999), 71.

¹⁶ Měřinský, *České země od příchodu Slovanů po Velkou Moravu II*, 536.

¹⁷ Měřinský, *České země od příchodu Slovanů po Velkou Moravu II*, 536. Сергей Алексеевич Ромашов, "Историческая география хазарского каганата (V-XIII вв.). Часть IV. и V.," *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 13 (2004): 214-217.

¹⁸ "Žitije Konstantina XII.," in *Magnae Moraviae fontes historici II : Textus biographici, hagiographici, liturgici*, ed. Dagmar Bartoňková and Radoslav Večerka (Praha : KLP, 2010), 75.

¹⁹ Měřinský, *České země od příchodu Slovanů po Velkou Moravu II*, 537.

²⁰ Tachios, *Cirillo e Metodio*, 58.

²¹ "Map 2.," in *Otto's historical atlas. Slovensko*, ed. Pavol Kršák (Praha : Ottovo nakladatelství, 2009), 68.

area of Shelkovskaya on the upper part of the river Terek. However, there is another hypothesis of Murad G. Magomedov that there were two Semenders. According to him, the older Semender lied in the Tarku region, but at the end of the 7th century, due to war conflicts Khazars, they were forced to build a new town which lied in the area of Shelkovskaya.²²

The same problem related to exact identification occurred in case of the town Ityl. It was originally thought to be located in the vicinity of the village Selitrennoye, near the former capital city of the Golden Horde Sarai-Batu. However, archaeological research did not confirm that assumption. Lev Nikolajevič Gumilev presented a theory that the town was destroyed by the river Volga. At present, experts speculate about a large hillfort which was uncovered in a close vicinity of the village Samosdelka to the south of Astrakhan.²³

Interesting information on a presumable duration of the journey itself is stated in a Hebrew letter which was written around 950. It contains information that the journey from the Khazar Khaganate to Constantinople could be made by the sea in 15 days. The letter mentions ships loaded with fish, furs and other goods which headed to the capital of the Byzantium.²⁴ Similar information was also preserved from the following period. French ambassador Guillaume de Rubrouck (1215 – 1295) experienced a cruise from Bosphorus through Sinope, Chersones to the Sugdaia (today's Sudak) between 7 and 21 May 1253, thus in 14 days.²⁵ This cruise could be made so fast only in case of favourable weather. Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos (905/906 – 959, coregent from 908, emperor 913, individual reign 945) in his work *On the Administration of the Empire* stated that the journey from the Danube to Sarkel took 60 days.²⁶

For approximate determination of the length of the route we have used publicly accessible project Orbis, which is the current result of the work group of Stanford University. It is a model of communication network (land, nautical and river routes) in the Roman period which reflects the situation after the year 200 AD and partially in later period. The researchers based this project on historical sources. The map materials were elaborated on grounds of published works of R. J. A. Talbert, which are based on data stated in Antonine Itinerary and in the well-known *Tabula Peutingeriana*. When working with the mentioned model, it is possible to choose from various modes (ways) of travelling – on foot, by mule, by horse, fast

²² Ромашов, “Историческая география,” 191-198.

²³ Ромашов, “Историческая география,” 202-212.

²⁴ Dimitroukas, *Reisen und Verkehr*, 442- 443.

²⁵ Dimitroukas, *Reisen und Verkehr*, 443.

²⁶ Constantine Porphyrogenitus, “De administrando imperio 42.,” 184.

redeployment of army, etc. Various parameters can be monitored there, such as the length of route, number of days and the price of the journey which is based on the Tetrarchian price edict of 301.²⁷ Apart from this we have used the internet portal <https://maps.google.com/>. If we consider the fact that the Byzantine mission to the Khazars travelled along the western coast of the Black Sea towards the delta of the river Danube and subsequently along the mouth of Dniester and Dnieper first to Chersones, according to the Orbis system the total route could measure 1,325 km and could be made in 27.2 days. From Chersones through Kerch strait towards the delta of the river Don, where there was harbour Tanais in the Roman period (today's Nedvigovka), the Orbis system calculated the distance of 729 km which, if based on this information, could be sailed in 10.5 days.²⁸ It is another 796 km from Nedvigovka to today's Samosdelka, the possible location of ancient town Ityl.²⁹ This distance could be travelled in 13.2 to 26.5 days depending on whether they travelled on foot or on a horse. In this case we can also assume that the brothers of Salonica together with their entourage used an identical route on their return journey.

The journey of Constantine and Methodius to Great Moravia in 863

Last year we celebrated the 1,150th anniversary of the arrival of Constantine and Methodius to Great Moravia. Although this event dates back to 863, it is not generally accepted in specialised works. There is also an assumption that it could happen in the year 864.³⁰ In case of the mission to Great Moravia, bigger stress is put on the intention of the Rastislav's message or to the target of the mission which was sent by the Emperor Michael III and by the patriarch Fotios, than to identification of the exact route of the members of the mission. This issue is present mainly in works of Jozef Cibulka³¹, František Dvorník³², Peter Ivanič and Martin Hetény³³,

²⁷ http://orbis.stanford.edu/ORBIS_v1paper_20120501.pdf

²⁸ <http://orbis.stanford.edu/#mapping>

²⁹ <https://www.google.com/maps/dir/Samosdelka,+Astrakhanskaya+oblast%27,+Rusko/Nedvigovka,+Rostovskaya+oblast%27,+Rusko/@46.7011367,41.4790665,7z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m1!4m13!1m5!1m1!1s0x41a95d6123e9ba29:0x3d4765305b539f44!2m2!1d47.8385683!2d46.0217555!1m5!1m1!1s0x40e3c2c3552e4633:0xbe05fb6aaa3c4bbe!2m2!1d39.3466667!2d47.2686111!3e2>

³⁰ Ján Dekan, *Slovenské dejiny II. Začiatky slovenských dejín a Ríša veľkomoravská* (Bratislava : SAVU, 1951), 77. Lubomír E. Havlík, "Byzantské mise a Velká Morava," *Sborník Matice moravské* 82 (1963): 111. Kútník Šmálov, *Prvý učiteľ slovienského národa*, 115.

³¹ Josef Cibulka, "Der Zeitpunkt der Ankunft der Brüder Konstantin-Cyrillus und Methodius in Mähren," *Byzantinoslavica* 26 (1965): 328-334.

³² Dvorník, *Byzantské misie u Slovanů*, 120.

Alojz Miškovič³⁴, Jozef Kútnik Šmálov³⁵ as well as Vojtěch Tkadlčík³⁶. Michal Lacko³⁷, Matúš Kučera³⁸ and Zdeněk Měřinský³⁹ also wrote about the route of Constantine and Methodius. The route of Salonica brothers to Moravia is only seldom depicted on maps. The paper of Josef Cibulka contains only simple drawing of the route.⁴⁰ In a map in *Otto's historical atlas Slovakia* the journey to Moravia is depicted as a route from Constantinople through Thessaloniki to Durrës and further directly to Venice through the Adriatic Sea. From there through Ljubljana and Szombathely to the Moravia.⁴¹ This route is similarly depicted in the publication *Pravdivý příběh byzantských věrozvěstů Konstantina a Metoděje (True story of the Byzantine apostles Constantine and Methodius)* with a subtitle *Křesťanství na Velké Moravě a byzantská misie (Christianity in Great Moravia and Byzantine mission)* by Ludek Galuška and Miroslav Vaškových.⁴² Assumed routes of the Constantine and Methodius are also presented in the picture in the article of Matej Ruttkay in the collection of papers named *Brothers, who changed the world – Constantine and Methodius*.⁴³ In his last works Vladimír Vavřínek

³³ Peter Ivanič and Martin Hetényi, "Cesta byzantskej misie na Veľkú Moravu z pohľadu českej a slovenskej historiografie," in *Trádia a prítomnosť misijného diela sv. Cyrila a Metoda* (Nitra : UKF, 2013), 74-93.

³⁴ Alojz Miškovič, "Apoštoli Slovienov" in *Apoštoli Slovienov : Sborník štúdií s obrázkovou prílohou* (Bratislava : Spolok sv. Vojtecha v Trnave nákladom CN, 1963), 55.

³⁵ Kútnik Šmálov, *Prvý učiteľ slovienskeho národa*, 113-114.

³⁶ Vojtěch Tkadlčík, "Datum příchodu slovanských apoštolů na Moravu," *Slavia* 38, no. 4 (1969): 546-547. Reference of eight days of travel between Thessaloniki and Belgrade is at the beginning of the 42nd chapter in the work *On the Administration of the Empire*. Constantine Porphyrogenetos stresses out that it was a peaceful journey. It means that in case of fast travel it was possible to shorten the time of travelling. Constantine Porphyrogenitus, "De administrando imperio 42.," 182.

³⁷ Michal Lacko, *Svätý Cyril a Metod*. 7th issue (Trnava : Dobrá kniha, 2011), 90-91.

³⁸ Matúš Kučera, *Postavy veľkomoravskej histórie*. 3rd issue (Bratislava : Perfekt, 2005), 115. See Matúš Kučera, *Slovenské dejiny I. : Od príchodu Slovanov do roku 1526*. (Bratislava : Literárne informačné centrum, 2008), 96.

³⁹ Měřinský, *České země od příchodu Slovanů po Velkou Moravu II*, 278-279.

⁴⁰ Cibulka, "Der Zeitpunkt der Ankunft," 324.

⁴¹ "Map 2.," 68.

⁴² Ludek Galuška and Miroslav Vaškových, *Pravdivý příběh byzantských věrozvěstů Konstantina a Metoděje (True story of the Byzantine apostles Constantine and Methodius). Křesťanství na Velké Moravě a byzantská misie (Christianity in Great Moravia and Byzantine mission)* (Uherské Hradiště : Slováké muzeum v Uherském Hradišti, 2013), 13.

⁴³ Matej Ruttkay, "Mocenské centrá Nitrianskeho kniežatstva," in *Bratia, ktorí menili svet – Konštantín a Metod*. (Bratislava; Nitra : Veda, 2012), 116.

published maps which depict the assumed directions of travels of the Salonica brothers.⁴⁴

Following hypotheses published up to the present on the route of the journey⁴⁵, means of travelling, as well as distances we can assume that the Byzantine mission could set out from the capital of the Byzantine Empire along the connecting route Via Egnatia which led to today's Durrës (Dyrrachion) and Apollonia and was originally used for military purposes. In the 8th to 10th century its significance decreased due to frequent attacks of the Slavs, the Avars and the Bulgarians to the Balkans and therefore Byzantine diplomatic delegations to Francian rulers preferred sailing on the sea towards Rome or Venice. However, Via Egnatia was safe during the period of peace. From written sources we learn about important messages from 869/870 the target of which was Constantinople. The first represented Luis the German and it was led by Anastasius Bibliothecarius. Emperor's delegation set out for a journey in November 869 and it arrived to Constantinople on 26 or 27 February 870. The second mission sent by the pope Hadrian II travelled from 10 June to 15 September 869. Its members probably travelled along the road Via Egnatia because they stopped in Thessaloniki. Both delegations left Constantinople in March 870 and on the way back they went along the connecting road Via Egnatia to Durrës. From there, the papal legates headed to Ancona and members of emperor's mission went to Siponto in Apulia. Unfortunately, the papal legates were attacked by the Neretvans which were pirates living on the Dalmatian coast. Anastasius sailed to Siponto without problems and through Benevento arrived to Rome.⁴⁶ Based on the preserved information we can conclude that in the stated period in the Mediterranean area the transport was usually combined – on the land and by the sea in every period of the year. This was probably the case of Byzantine mission which headed to Rastislav too. After travelling along Via Egnatia, Constantine and Methodius together with their company could continue from Durrës to Venice by the sea. Subsequently, they set out along the well-known Amber Road to the area of Carnuntum (today's Petronell and Bad Deutsch-Altenburg), thus through Aemona (today's Ljubljana), Celeia (today's Celje), Poetevio (today's Ptuj), Sabaria (today's Szombathely), Arrabona (today's Győr), Scarbantia

⁴⁴ Vavřínek, *Cyril a Metoděj*, 177-178. Vladimír Vavřínek, "The Cyrillo-Methodian Mission in Great Moravia," in *Cyril and Methodius – Their Era, Lives, and Work* (Brno : MZM, 2013), 48.

⁴⁵ For detailed overview see Peter Ivanič and Martin Hetényi, "Cesta byzantskej misie," 83-86.

⁴⁶ Dimitroukas, *Reisen und Verkehr*, 348-349. Dvorník, *Byzantské misie*, 298-302.

(today's Sopron) and then, after crossing the river Danube directly to the seat of the Moravian ruler.

Since in the Middle Ages summer was the most optimal period for travelling not only because of the length of days which were six hours longer than in winter, but also because of possibilities to gain food and travellers could sleep outside.⁴⁷ Probable date of departure of Constantine and Methodius could be dated around June. In calculation of the length of the route and the number of days necessary for the travel we relied on the data from the Orbis system. After setting the starting point (Constantinople) and the final destination (Carnuntum) we selected the mode where the system finds the fastest route. In this case it presented a model where the major part of the route was made by the Aegean Sea and Adriatic Sea. Its total length would be 3,991 km and the travel could take 34.6 days. The cheapest route in the Roman period would be the journey through the Aegean Sea around the Peloponnese and further to the north along the Italian coast to the Patavium and then on the land through the Alpine passes. However, this possibility is less probable. The route itself has a length of 3,990 km and could be made in 50.2 days and, moreover, it would have to lead through the territory of the Frankish Empire. As the shortest route the system selected the route through Phillipolis, Naissus, Singidunum along the right bank of the river Danube to Carnuntum.⁴⁸ This matches the opinion of Czech archaeologist Josef Cibulka who writes about this topic in his study *Der Zeitpunkt der Ankunft der Brüder Konstantin-Cyrillus und Methodius in Mähren*.⁴⁹ According to the system, the distance of 1,587 km could be made in 52.9 days.⁵⁰ This information is almost identical to the calculation of the mentioned historian which assumed the distance of 1,600 km which could be made in 6 weeks.⁵¹ Our preferred route from Constantinople thorough Philippi, Amphipolis, Thessaloniki, Heraclea to Dyrrhachium has the length 985 km and could be made in 32.8 days. This model does not include Venice which was established in later period. Therefore, Aquileia was chosen as the nearest port. The voyage from Dyrrhachium to Aquileia in July could last 7.6 days, including stops in Adriatic harbours Epidaurum and Salona. In the same month the journey from Aquileia to Carnuntum could be made in 15.6 days. The assumed length of the route from Constantinople to Carnuntum is 2,380 km and

⁴⁷ Norbert Ohler, *Cestování ve středověku* (Jinočany : Nakladatelství H&H, 2003), 29-30.

⁴⁸ <http://orbis.stanford.edu/#mapping>

⁴⁹ Cibulka, "Der Zeitpunkt der Ankunft," 328-334.

⁵⁰ <http://orbis.stanford.edu/#mapping>

⁵¹ Cibulka, "Der Zeitpunkt der Ankunft," 332-334.

according to the Orbis model it can be made in 56 days.⁵² From Carnuntum to the territory of Moravia it is only several kilometres which could be made in one day. This would mean that the Byzantine mission which was led by Constantine and Methodius could be accepted by Rastislav in August 863.

Constantine and Methodius on the way to Rome

The work *Vita Constantini-Cyrelli cum translatione s. Clementis*, the origin of which dates to the period of St. Cyril's death (869), states that the Salonica brothers spent four and a half year in Great Moravia before they came to Rome.⁵³ It was supposed that the stated time period was understood from the beginning of their stay in Great Moravia until their arrival to Rome including travelling. Based on this information the historians assume that Constantine and Methodius with their disciples left the territory of the Great Moravia in the second quarter of the year 867⁵⁴ or in summer of the same year⁵⁵. The arrival of Salonica brothers to Rome dates to the second half of December 867 or sometime at the beginning of January 868. However, it was definitely after the consecration of the pope Hadrian I (700 – 795), which took place on Sunday 14 December 867. Slovak church historian Jozef Kútnik Šmálov thinks that they came to Rome at the beginning of the second half of December 867, while he states that they travelled from Moravia to Rome for one month and another month and half they stayed at Kocel's seat and in Venice.⁵⁶ It is assumed that the stay at Kocel's seat in Mosaburg (today's Zalavár – Vársziget) lasted at least three weeks to three months.⁵⁷ Vladimír Vavřínek believes that they left Kocel in September or at the beginning of October 867.⁵⁸ They could have stayed in Venice for half a month up to six or seven weeks.⁵⁹ It is obvious from the above-stated that the well-known experts in the topic of Cyril and Methodius mission do not coincide in setting the time of their

⁵² <http://orbis.stanford.edu/#mapping>

⁵³ "Vita Constantini-Cyrelli cum translatione s. Clementis 7.," in *Magnae Moraviae fontes historici II : Textus biographici, hagiographici, liturgici*, ed. Dagmar Bartoňková and Radoslav Večerka (Praha : KLP, 2010), 109.

⁵⁴ Richard Marsina, *Metodov boj*. 3rd issue (Bratislava : Vydavateľstvo spolku slovenských spisovateľov, spol. s r. o., 2012), 49.

⁵⁵ Peter Ratkoš, "Obdobie včasného feudalizmu. First part. Veľkomoravské obdobie (do roku 907)," in *Dejiny Slovenska I (do roku 1526)* (Bratislava : Veda, 1986), 102.

⁵⁶ Kútnik Šmálov, *Prvý učiteľ slovienskeho národa*, 115.

⁵⁷ Dekan, *Slovenské dejiny II*, 74. Měřinský, *České země od příchodu Slovanů po Velkou Moravu II*, 318. Vojtěch Tkadlčík was even thinking about 9 - 10 months. Tkadlčík, "Datum příchodu slovanských apoštolů na Moravu," 546-547.

⁵⁸ Vavřínek, *Cyril a Metoděj*, 135.

⁵⁹ Cibulka, "Der Zeitpunkt der Ankunft," 364. Dekan, *Slovenské dejiny II*, 74.

travels and stays in Mosaburg and Venice. The same situation applies to the opinion about the aim of this journey.⁶⁰ For example, Jozef Kútnik Šmálov states that Constantine and Methodius were invited to Rome by Nicholas I (868 – 867) when they were in Moravia. This invitation did not relate to Bavarian intrigues in Rome, but it was a sign of recognition and confidence.⁶¹ According to him, the Salonica brothers in Rome wanted to achieve acknowledgement of the old Slavonic church language, establishment of independent church province in Moravia and consecration of at least three disciples to bishops.⁶² Other Slovak church historians Michal Lacko and Ján Hnilica state the same three reasons for this travel: 1. determination of the hierarchy for Great Moravia, 2. consecration of some disciples, 3. acknowledgement of the Roman-Slovak church service.⁶³ Richard Marsina in this case mentions Byzantine as well as Rome. He says that if we consider the fact that it was the definite departure of Constantine and Methodius from Great Moravia, it is not possible to consider Rome their final destination, only Byzantine and particularly Constantinople, since they were sent from there and should return there after they have fulfilled their role. Because they wanted to get their disciples consecrated to priests the aim of the journey for the majority of the company became Venice.⁶⁴ Based on the geopolitical as well as church situation at that time Vladimír Vavřínek assumes that Constantine and Methodius tried to have their disciples consecrated in Grad which was the seat of the patriarchate. He also relies on the well-known Constantine's discussion with his disciples in Venice which at that time was under the church administration of Grad.⁶⁵ In his extensive study, Ivan Varšo made a detailed critical overview of individual interpretations of Czech and Slovak historians considering the departure of Constantine and Methodius from Moravia.⁶⁶ From the latest works dedicated to the stated issue from the point of view of historiography

⁶⁰ Nikolaos Trunte, "Die römische Mission Konstantins des Philosophen. Zur byzantinischen Diplomatie der 60er Jahre des 9. Jahrhunderts" Преславска книжовна школа 7 (2004): 256-293.

⁶¹ Kútnik Šmálov, *Prvý učiteľ slovienskeho národa*, 144-145.

⁶² Kútnik Šmálov, *Prvý učiteľ slovienskeho národa*, 146.

⁶³ Lacko, *Svätý Cyril a Metod*, 107. Ján Hnilica, *Cyrl a Metod. Horliví hlásatelia Božieho slova a verní pastieri cirkvi*. 3rd issue (Bratislava : Vydavateľstvo spolku slovenských spisovateľov, spol. s r. o., 2012), 45.

⁶⁴ Marsina, *Metodov boj*, 49.

⁶⁵ Vavřínek, *Cyrl a Metoděj*, 137.

⁶⁶ Ivan Varšo, "Dva otázky retrospektívy byzantskej misie: „Vrátili sa z Moravy“ (ŽM 5) – „A šiel svätiteľ svojich učeníkov“ (ŽK 15)," *Historické rozhľady* 3(2006): 17-58.

we can mention the article of Martina Lukáčová⁶⁷. Based on the opinion of Anthony-Emil N. Tachiosa the answers to questions related to the motivation of Constantine and Methodius' departure to Venice are ambiguous and based on hypotheses. The most probable explanation, according to him, is the fact that members of Venice church hierarchy who could perform the above-mentioned consecration played a significant role in their decision making. He states that the second, not less relevant although more prosaic reason was the location of the Venice harbour which could be their starting point on their way to Constantinople.⁶⁸

The route of the journey of Salonica brothers to Great Moravia is much less discussed in literature than the aim of this journey and their intention. Jozef Kútnik Šmálov and Josef Cibulka focused on the route in more detail. The first mentioned thinks that the entourage went along the so called Amber Route which in ancient times led from Italy to the mouth of the river Moravia into the Danube. Since Kocel's residence was not located on the main route from Carnuntum to Aquileia, it was necessary to turn to Sabarie pass approximately 80 km and go to the ancient Roman town called Valcum (today's Keszthely-Fenékpuszta) which was located in the southern part of the Lake Balaton⁶⁹. He thinks that they proceeded further towards Ptuj, Celje, Ljubjana, Aquileia and Venice. From the Moravian borders together with the turning to Mosaburg and then to Venice they went all together around 801 km which could take them approximately twenty days. The route of the journey led through Ravenna and Rimini where they got to the ancient route Via Flaminia. Then they continued through Pesaro, Fano, Gubbio, Noceru, Spolento, Terni, Narni to Rome. Based on his hypotheses Jozef Kútnik Šmálov came to a conclusion that the duration of the journey from Venice to Roma was two weeks.⁷⁰

Josef Cibulka analysed the route in more detail. For calculation of the distance between individual significant communication points he used a source known as *Itinerarium Antonini*. For this reason he chose Carnuntum as the starting point of the route because its location was close to Moravia. Since he assumed that Constantine and Methodius together with their entourage continued along the so called Amber Route with one stop at the Lake Balaton, he analysed distances between the most significant places on this communication. Namely he focused on Scarabantia, Sabaria, Valco,

⁶⁷ Martina Lukáčová, "Historiografický konsept cesty Konštantína a Metoda do Ríma v r. 867," in *Trádia a prítomnosť misijného diela sv. Cyrila a Metoda* (Nitra : UKF, 2013), 93-100.

⁶⁸ Tachios, *Cirillo e Metodio*, 93.

⁶⁹ At present the Lake Balaton in Hungary.

⁷⁰ Kútnik Šmálov, *Prvý učiteľ slovienskeho národa*, 147-156.

Mestrianis, Poetovio, Celeia, Emona, Altinum (today's Altino near Venice). Based on his calculations, Salonica brothers would travel 801 km from Moravian borders to Venice, including the visit of Kocel'. Their journey from Venice should continue towards Ravenna, ancient Ariminum (today's Rimini) and along Via Flaminia directly to Rome. The route should all together measure 1,321 km and could be made in 33 days provided they travelled 40 km a day. His calculations do not include the stay at Kocel's and neither the stay in Venice where Constantine and Methodius spent longer period of time.⁷¹ Josef Cibulka described the route not only in writing, but he attached a drawing to his article too.⁷²

The journey to Kocel' and to Rome. Travels of Methodius in 869 – 873

In 869 the pope sent Methodius to Kocel' as his apostolic legate. Although Kocel' welcomed Methodius warmly, he sent him back to Rome together with delegation of twenty noblemen with the request for episcopal ordination. Hadrian II decided to satisfy this request and made Methodius the head of a renewed Pannonian diocese the seat of which was originally in Sirmium (today's Sremska Mitrovica).⁷³ Methodius returned to Kocel' at the end of the year 869 and stayed there for several months. Vladimír Vavřínek states that he set out for journey to Rastislav in spring 870.⁷⁴ Sources do not state the specific route of his travel. We can only assume that it was the same route as when he travelled with his brother Constantine in 867. And thus, Methodius travelled along Via Flaminia and then along the so called Amber Route.

The third journey to Rome

In 880 Methodius had to go to Rome again because in June 879 he was invited by the pope John VIII. He should defend himself in Roman Curia against accusations that he celebrates church service in Slavonic language and teaches people fallacies.⁷⁵ He probably set out for his journey at the beginning of spring.⁷⁶ The visit ended well, since the pope issued the well-known letter *Industriae tuae*, by which he confirmed the archbishop function of Methodius and the use of Slavonic language in liturgy.

⁷¹ In detail Cibulka, "Der Zeitpunkt der Ankunft," 349-352.

⁷² Cibulka, "Der Zeitpunkt der Ankunft," 326.

⁷³ Vavřínek, *Cyrl a Metoděj*, 175-181.

⁷⁴ Vavřínek, *Cyrl a Metoděj*, 186-187.

⁷⁵ "Epistolae 81.," in *Magnae Moraviae fontes historici III : Diplomata, epistolae, textus historici varii* ed. Dagmar Bartoňková and Radoslav Večerka (Praha : KLP, 2011), 156-157.

⁷⁶ Vavřínek, *Cyrl a Metoděj*, 243.

Moreover, he took Moravian ruler Svätopluk under his protection and named the priest Viching the head of the newly established Nitra diocese.⁷⁷

Svätopluk himself might have sent the mission to Rome. Michal Lacko assumed that in case of this journey to Rome, Methodius travelled individually and not as part of the mentioned mission. He further thought that the archbishop crossed the river Danube at Komárno and went around the territory under the administration of the Frankish Empire through Pannonia and Croatia. Then he should travel to Ancona by boat and from there he should continue to Rome. On his way back he should use the same route, while he spent some time in Croatia where, according to Michal Lacko, he introduced Slavonic church service. He based his opinion on the reference in the so called third *Life of Naum*, in which it is mentioned that on his way back Methodius sailed to Illyricum and then continued on land.⁷⁸ However, this hypothesis is not very probable. The stated information in the text is written after the discussion about the death of the St. Cyril in Rome and thus it is rather related to the return of Methodius to Great Moravia in 870.⁷⁹ Vladimír Vavřínek in his monograph *Cyril a Metoděj mezi Konstantinopolí a Římem (Cyril and Methodius between Constantinople and Rome)* develops another theory based on which Methodius, who should stop in Riechenau, returned to Great Moravia later than Viching. In a local monastery in Riechenau a book called *Liber confraternitatum* was found in which there is the name *Methodios* written in Greek together with other names and on another page there is *episcopus Methodius*. Apart from names of members of the monastery community, the names of visitors were written in this book too. Therefore, Vladimír Vavřínek assumes that Methodius wrote his name into this book on his way back from Rome to Moravia in summer 880. This would mean that he and his company had to cross the Alps.⁸⁰ Although the opinions about the route of travel of Methodius differ, there is congruence in opinions of the majority of historians who think that Methodius did not return from the visit in Rome together with Viching. Part of them believes that Viching came to Great Moravia earlier than Methodius.⁸¹ However, Richard Marsina assumes that Viching left Rome later than Methodius.⁸²

⁷⁷ "Epistolae 90.," in *Magnae Moraviae fontes historici III : Diplomata, epistolae, textus historici varii* ed. Dagmar Bartoňková and Radoslav Večerka (Praha : KLP, 2011), 161-173.

⁷⁸ Lacko, *Svätý Cyril a Metoděj*, 166-167. Drawing of the assumed route is published there.

⁷⁹ See Slovak translation of Andrej Škoviera, "Tretí slovanský život Nauma Ochridského a dátum vyhnaní Metodových učeníkov," *Slavica slovacca* 42, no. 2 (2007): 114.

⁸⁰ Vavřínek, *Cyril a Metoděj*, 251-256.

⁸¹ Dvorník, *Byzantské misie u Slovanů*, 178. Lacko, *Svätý Cyril a Metoděj*, 175-176. Vavřínek, *Cyril a Metoděj*, 251.

⁸² Marsina, *Metodov boj*, 91.

In case of the third journey of Methodius to Rome we assume that the Moravian archbishop used the route which he used before because he was already familiar with this way. Although, in this case he did not stop at the Lake Balaton but he continued directly from his seat in Great Moravia through Scarabantia, Sabaria, Poetovio, Celeia, Emona and then towards Ravenna, Ariminum and directly to Rome. Jozef Cibulka, based on calculations with the use of data stated in the work *Itinerarium Antonini*, assumes that the total distance between Rome and borders of Great Moravia could be around 1,161 km and could be travelled in 29 days.⁸³

The journey to Constantinople

The thirteenth chapter of the *Life of Methodius* mentions that the Byzantine emperor invited Methodius to Constantinople. The Emperor Basileios I (867 – 886) himself welcomed the Moravian archbishop after arriving to the capital of the empire. The emperor alike the patriarch Fotios liked Methodius. Methodius was on this visit accompanied by his disciples.⁸⁴ The route of the journey as well as the purpose of the journey remains unclear. It is assumed that Methodius was invited in 881 and travelled to Constantinople together with his company in the last two thirds of the mentioned year, or at the beginning of the following year.⁸⁵ Although there are some opinions that he could travel through Bulgaria or the territory of today's Croatia, it is quite probable that Methodius chose the same route as in 863.⁸⁶ It was the last longer journey which he undertook before his death in 885.

In the Middle Ages travelling to long distances was very expensive, dangerous and exhausting. St. Methodius together with his brother St. Constantine-Cyril were among those people who could travel and get to know several countries due to the mission ordered by the Byzantine imperial court. It can be perceived as an added value which contributed to their personal erudition and the creation of impressive general knowledge in comparison to aims fulfilled and of immeasurable importance, which represents their specialised political and cultural-social activity.

⁸³ Cibulka, "Der Zeitpunkt der Ankunft," 352.

⁸⁴ "Žitije Mefodija XIII.," in *Magnae Moraviae fontes historici II : Textus biographici, hagiographici, liturgici*, ed. Dagmar Bartoňková and Radoslav Večerka (Praha : KLP, 2010), 136-137.

⁸⁵ Měřínský, *České země od příchodu Slovanů po Velkou Moravu II*, 714-716. Vavřínek, *Cyryl a Metoděj*, 256-260.

⁸⁶ Dvorník, *Byzantské misie u Slovanů*, 184-185. Vavřínek, *Cyryl a Metoděj*, 260.

Peter IVANIČ, Martina LUKÁČOVÁ

JOURNEYS OF ST. METHODIUS WITHIN THE YEARS 860 - 881

- s u m m a r y -

St. Methodius together with his brother St. Constantine-Cyril were not only among the most intelligent Christian missionaries and diplomats of their period, but, as documented in written sources about their life and work, we can classify them among the most significant ancient travellers. In this article we focused on longer journey which Methodius made to the Khazars, Great Moravia, to Rome and at the end in 881 to Byzantium. Primarily we tried to determine the specific routes of their journeys to describe current opinions about their aims and the duration of travelling. For determination of the length of these routes we used publicly accessible project Orbis which was made by Stanford University project group.